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A PAMPHLET,

ENTITLED

"REMARKS ON THE SEVENTH ANNUAL REPORT OF THE HON. HORACE MANN, SECRETARY OF THE MASSACHUSETTS BOARD OF EDUCATION."

A FEW days ago a pamphlet, with the title given above, was put into my hands. It emanates, as a prefatory notice informs us, from more than thirty of the teachers in our public schools — some of whom I know to be among the most respected of our fellow-citizens. Coming from such men, I have been very much surprised to find such doctrines as this pamphlet contains, and such a spirit as it breathes. It contradicts the language of the uniform tenor of their lives.

They *have*, at least some of them, desired to elevate the character and calling of the teacher — to introduce the best methods — and to bring to bear the highest motives in the instruction and government of a school. Here, they are seeking to make us satisfied with the schools and teachers — the methods and motives — as they have been, and as they are.

I can hardly understand how *they* have determined thus to come out, in a hostile attitude, against one who has done so much to advance the cause in which they are engaged; to elevate, and bring to honor, the school and the teacher; and to cause Education to be considered the first interest of society.

Is it possible that these gentlemen are disappointed in the declarations of this Seventh Report? Could they really expect that a person who had seen the best schools abroad, would come home prepared to pronounce panegyrics upon the Grammar Schools of Boston? Can it be that they are not aware that many of their fellow-citizens look upon these schools as doing

very little, compared with what might be done? Have they learned nothing from the almost uniform look of disappointment with which *intelligent* strangers leave their schools? They enumerate, with apparent self-gratulation, the names of the able and distinguished persons who have, as committee men, had the supervision of their schools. Do they not remember that many of the ablest and best of these have either spent their term of service in introducing reform, or have attempted, in vain, measures of more radical reform, which, as they thought, were imperatively demanded? Do they not remember how much has been done to improve their schools within the last twenty years; — how much even within ten? And that, when nothing was taught in their schools but the merest elements, the cry of "excellent schools"! was just as loud as it is now? And, after all this, do they not yet understand the true meaning of these annual eulogiums? Do they still suppose their schools the best in the world? And are they really disappointed that Mr. Mann did not pronounce them such?

I have not time to go into a full examination of their pamphlet. But there are some points on which they have so completely misapprehended, as I conceive, the object of the Secretary of the Board of Education, and others — and those of great importance — on which they have done such injustice to him and to the cause to which he is devoted, that I am compelled to appear in defence of what I believe to be truth and justice.

The first point to which I would call attention, is, the declaration, that the cause of education was "*never more prosperous than at the time the Board of Education was formed.*" I believe this is true of Boston, and a few other places. But, as far as could be learned from the declaration of persons of intelligence, the case, in many parts of the Commonwealth, was just the reverse. In many places, *it was never less prosperous.* The Hon. J. G. Carter, to whom these gentlemen refer, wrote much, and with great power, to show how far the schools had fallen from their former high state, and how greatly they came short of the demands of the public. The letters of Mr. Carter excited very general attention. Their truth was admitted. Year after year, at meetings of the American Institute, reports and statements were made, showing clearly, that unless scores of most intelligent men of all professions were entirely misinformed and deceived, the schools in many parts of the State were in a deplorable condition. This general impression led the Institute to address Memorials to the Legislature, asking that something might be done for the improvement of the schools. It was admitted by the Representatives from all parts of the Common-

wealth, that the strong statements made in these memorials were not exaggerated. In their wisdom they acted on the subject, and created a Board of Education; thereby not only admitting that something ought to be done for the schools, but meaning that something should be done.

Whom did the Board choose for their Secretary? A man who had just given evidence of his profound and intimate acquaintance with the laws and institutions of Massachusetts, by the important part he had taken in the preparation of the Revised Statutes of the State; and who had proved, in ways which it falls to the lot of few men in a century to conceive, much less to execute, how deeply he felt for suffering humanity, and how strenuously he would labor for its relief. Witness that noble institution, the hospital for the insane, at Worcester.

Horace Mann was called from a prominent position in civil life, and a most lucrative profession, to do what he could for the improvement of the schools. He listened to the call, he forgot his own personal interests, and entered upon the work with a self-sacrificing devotion, which has seldom been surpassed.

What he did in his earlier Reports constitutes one of the charges now brought against him. He had the boldness and honesty to declare in what condition he found the schools. He said it in words not to be mistaken — in words which resounded not only from one end of the State to the other — but from side to side of the whole country. Every where they opened men's eyes. What he declared to be true in Massachusetts, was found to be true in almost every State in the Union. He did, indeed, as the gentlemen charge, say much about "incompetent teachers," — "ignorance of teachers," — "depressed state of Common Schools," — "that the schools were under a sleepy supervision," and many things more, great and alarming truths, some of which the gentlemen have quoted; and many others, of equal moment, which they have not. He not only said these things, but he proved them. He called attention to them. He made men feel their vast importance. He made them tremble for the Commonwealth, if things were allowed to remain unchanged. If any one asks, with what effect this trumpet-blast of the Secretary was blown, let him look at any, or all of the School Returns, which have annually, since then, made their appearance. Not an assertion of the Secretary, in regard to the ignorance and incompetence of teachers, and the numerous defects in the schools, which he pointed out, but is confirmed, in the amplest manner. The faithful citizens of the Commonwealth have been effectually alarmed and aroused. Every shout of the Secretary is reëchoed from a

hundred hills. Every word of his has a hundred responses, and that not only from men like Dr. Howe, and the President of the Institute, who, as the writers of the pamphlet so charitably pretend, have been flattered, or caressed, and must pay in kind, — but from other men, good and true men, — strangers, often, to the Secretary, but at home to every thing which concerns the vital interests of their children, and not to be imposed upon by false representations. Those volumes of School Returns are the most remarkable volumes upon the subject of the Schools ever published. One feels proud of our glorious old Commonwealth, on reading them; proud, that there are men in almost every one of its three hundred towns, capable of feeling truth so deeply, and of uttering it so boldly, and so powerfully. And the most remarkable thing in these Returns is their unanimity upon all essential points. There is just enough of difference to show there was no collusion. Let any person read these Returns, and believe, if he can, that this multitude of strong-minded men have been seduced by the Secretary into a reaffirmation of his opinions; for his opinions are reaffirmed, in the fullest and most striking manner. The simple truth is, the "theories" of the Secretary have stood the test of the experience of the wise men of the State.

The next point brought to view in the "Remarks," is, the *radical doctrines* which have been broached by some of the friends of the Secretary. They have spoken against corporal punishment, prizes, emulation, and treating children with distrust. Their opinions are quoted, somewhat at length. Dr. Howe is quoted as saying of his own school: "We have no corporal punishments, no prizes, no taking precedence in classes, no degradations. Emulation there is, and will be; nature provides for this, in the self-esteem of each individual." I am reported to have said what I am very willing to repeat, and, while I repeat it, I appeal to the experience of persons in "the world," as well as out, for its truth, — "There is no so ready way to produce falsehood in a child, as to doubt his word." I repeat it, and I believe it to apply to men, as well as to children. Show a man that you suspect him, and you tempt him to deceive you. Treat him with generous confidence, and you tempt him to generosity in return. Mr. Pierce is quoted as saying: "And here I would state, that my theory goes to the entire exclusion of the premium and emulation system, and of corporal punishment." On these opinions the gentlemen pronounce: "It is hard to conceive of any thing more *radical*, and less *conservative*, than such views, when considered in connection with the administration of all the institutions of New England, during the last two centuries."

It is not quite fair to make the Secretary responsible for all these opinions. From one of them he has always been known to dissent. He believes in the necessity of corporal punishment, in schools organized as most of our public schools now are. He would only have it restrained within the narrowest practicable limits. He would have it appealed to only in the last resort. With this exception, it is admitted that these individuals do hold the opinions which are here attributed to them. For one, I am willing to declare, that I hold these opinions, those expressed by Dr. Howe, those of the President of the American Institute, and those of Mr. Pierce,—with the single exception, that I believe in the necessity of corporal punishment in most Common Schools; and if I had the clarion voice of the Secretary, I would sound these opinions in the ears of every teacher in Christendom. I have done what little I could, to make them known, and, with the blessing of God, I mean to do more; for I verily believe them to be the truth. I base my whole doctrine of motives upon the Gospel, and there I find nothing of blows, or of distrust, or emulation, or desire of pecuniary prizes, or distinctions among men, as the incentives to the highest action. I believe all these motives are strong enough already in "the world," without our adding to their strength, by constantly appealing to them in school. And I would ask these gentlemen whether they have not themselves frequently had, whether they do not still have, misgivings as to the effect upon the character of the flogging system, the emulation system, and the medal system? Their responsibility is now divided; school committees come in for a share. But if they were singly responsible to God and to the future men and women whom their influence is contributing to form, would they not modify the course they now pursue, in some most important particulars?

The authors of the Remarks have most gratuitously assumed, that all which the Secretary says of the good schools, or remarkable schools, of Scotland and Prussia, was intended, invidiously, against the teachers of the Boston schools. They seem to ground their assumption on the following sentence, which they quote, among others, from the Seventh Report:

"Perhaps I saw as fair a proportion of the Prussian and Saxon schools, as one would see of the schools in Massachusetts, who should visit those of Boston, Newburyport, Lexington, New Bedford, Worcester, Northampton, and Springfield."

This would, evidently, have precisely the meaning it now has, if seven other towns of the same size, were there such, had been named instead of these. It is merely an illustration, intended to give an idea of the extent of his information, in regard to the

German Schools. The authors of the Remarks insist upon understanding as meant for them what was evidently not meant for them, particularly; and the word "Boston," in the above quotation, so dwelt upon by these gentlemen, might have been replaced by another name, New York, Baltimore, or New Orleans, if such occurred in the Massachusetts catalogue, without altering its meaning in any thing essential.

It would have been much more fair, and perhaps more near to the truth, if the gentlemen had taken it for granted that the reason why the Secretary has not visited them, as he has teachers in other parts of the State, was, that he knew they needed it less — that they received the careful supervision which he wished to see exercised throughout the State. I have no authority to say this was the case. I have reason to believe it to be, from the fact, that he entertains the highest respect for the character of those among them with whom he is best acquainted. Indeed, it is obvious that the teachers of the large towns and cities must need the aid of the information and advice of a Superintendent of Schools, supposing him capable of giving any, far less than the changing and occasional teachers of the small districts in the country towns. In the large towns, many of the difficulties, to remove which the Secretary has been exerting himself, do not exist. Some of these are the frequent change of teachers and books, and the consequent multiplicity of text-books, carelessness in the selection of teachers, and incompetency in teachers, from the inadequacy of compensation. These are evils of great importance. But they are almost confined to the small towns; and in order to remove, or lessen them, it was right that the Secretary should give his first attention to the country schools. With these schools he has consequently become most familiar, and it is perfectly natural that he should compare them with those he saw abroad. It would have been equally natural for these gentlemen to say, "Mr. Mann cannot, in his disparaging comparisons, mean *our* schools, which he has not seen, but those only with which he is familiar."

I believe most readers of his last Report, who were familiar with his former Reports, must have thought thus. It is much to be regretted that it should not have occurred to the authors of the Remarks, or, if it did occur to them, that they did not allow it to influence their judgment of that Report.

The second part of the Remarks is a notice of the absurdly active Scotch schools which Mr. Mann describes, and of some of the Prussian modes of instruction. The notice is a fair one, excepting, always, the gratuitous assumption that Mr. Mann intended, in his account of either, any reflection upon the schools

of Boston. It is not easy to conceive of any thing more objectionable than the modes of instruction used in the Scotch schools. Certainly, any one, who had seen the quiet energy of some of our Boston schools, would not hesitate to prefer it to the rabid and exhausting volubility of master and scholar in the Scotch.

The example of the Prussian school-master suggests the great advantages of thorough daily preparation; a point in which our teachers are probably most at fault; but the unreasonableness of the extreme to which it would lead, of rejecting text-books altogether, is, as it deserves, well pointed out.

Then comes a long argument, which seems to be conducted with ability, in defence of the usual modes of teaching to read. It is, however, so much embarrassed by irrelevant matter that one cannot easily judge of the argument itself. The attempts at wit, which, if successful, would have given point and spirit to the logic, here only tend to obscure it; and the intended sarcasm has no other effect than to draw the attention of the reader from the question before him to the melancholy state of feeling which pervaded the breast of the writer. One cannot help wondering, that a simple difference of opinion upon the best mode of teaching a child his letters, should be so deeply moving; and one looks around for something extrinsic to the argument to account for the excitement. We welcome the *argument*, believing that nothing but good can come from discussion, fairly conducted; but we cannot, with these authors, look upon it as a very grave offence that the Secretary should have embraced a view of the subject which has been adopted by multitudes of successful teachers in this country and abroad, how much soever it may differ from that held by these gentlemen.

The fourth part of the Remarks, entitled School Discipline, is a very able, well-considered, temperate, and thorough examination of that subject. The author,— for there is a singleness of view and uniform beauty of style about the argumentative parts, strongly indicating them as the work of one,— the animadversions may have come from others,— if not, they certainly came from a totally different region of the author's mind,— the author seeks to establish the position, that "implicit obedience to rightful authority must be inculcated and enforced upon children as the very germ of all good order in future society." This most important principle is sustained with power and success. It is placed, so far as reasoning can place it, on an immovable foundation. All this is excellent, so far as it goes; and all this the Secretary of the Board of Education, and the other gentlemen quoted, would be the last to gainsay. But they would say,— at least, one of

them does say, — that this whole argument, excellent as it is, falls far short of the end which authority should have in view, — infinitely short of the end for which authority should be established.

Authority is either that of brute force, personal authority, or the authority of law. Of the first, I have little to say. I admit its necessity in extreme cases. I grieve that it should have occupied so large a place in so pure a mind as that from which this portion of the Remarks came. Strange, that the history of discipline in jails, prison-ships, and asylums for the insane, should not have suggested to him the advantages of a higher principle.

Personal authority should be founded upon personal qualities; upon those which command respect, or those which win affection. Strength of character, intelligence, knowledge, wisdom, eloquence, are naturally commanding; the Christian graces, gentleness, kindness, patience, readiness to forgive, and the charity which *thinketh no evil*, are, as naturally, winning. On such foundations as these should the personal authority of the teacher be established. And let it not be deemed unreasonable in the community, or in those who have influence with the community, to be making a continually louder call for such qualities as these, in the teachers of our public schools. There *is* a particular style of character appropriate to the vocation of a teacher. As the true spirit of Christianity more fully prevails, the demand for this must be more strongly felt, and more distinctly declared.

Higher than either of these forms of authority, is the authority of law. And, by law, I mean the moral law, — whatever is right, just, and true. Law, thus understood, appeals to the conscience; and it is only by the sedulous cultivation of the conscience, by bringing it into action, and keeping it in action, that the authority of law can be enthroned. Every school must have its regulations and laws; which should be obeyed, not because they are the regulations of the school, but because they are intrinsically reasonable, wise, and just. Every teacher who compels obedience to a law which is unwise, unreasonable, or unjust, does what he can to dethrone conscience, and set up his own will in its place. Of course, no teacher can be expected to make laws absolutely perfect. But they must be, according to his clear, unimpassioned judgment, as faultless as he can make them. And when made, they must be distinctly understood to be his; and never, for a moment, allowed to take the place, in the pupil's mind, of the great eternal laws of God.

Throughout the reasoning of the Remarks, authority is spoken of as something good in itself; and no higher view is taken.—

The authority of law, as I have explained it, *is* absolutely good, in itself; but not so is any other authority; and the writer has left out of sight, entirely, the end for which any other authority should be established. That end is, in a school, the elevation of the pupil; the preparation, not only of his mind, but of his heart and his character, for the duties and responsibilities of life. It is, according to that excellent law of the Commonwealth which provides for the Common Schools, — "to impress on the minds of children and youth the principles of piety, justice, and a sacred regard to truth; love to their country; humanity, and universal benevolence; sobriety, industry, and frugality; chastity, moderation, and temperance; and those other virtues, which are the ornament of human society, and the basis upon which a republican constitution is founded."

Now let me ask whether the authority of brute force, or — if that expression seems a harsh one — the authority which is established and maintained by corporal punishment, has a very direct tendency to form the minds of children to the virtues above enumerated? Is it not obvious, from the very words of the law, that a higher influence than fear of punishment, or emulation, or the desire of getting a prize, is expected to be exerted by every teacher in the public schools?

There is a vast diversity of mind and feeling apparent in the different parts of these Remarks. Some of them seem to have been uttered by generous men, reluctant to find fault, and delighting not in disparagement; others breathe the suspicion and distrust which they defend, as if it were the very air of heaven to them.

One is surprised and almost shocked to find such lofty views and such a generous and charitable spirit in such strange companionship. And one cannot help wondering that a company of men of characters, — as indicated by their language, — so diverse and heterogeneous, should not have had more indulgence for the Secretary, who differs from some of them infinitely less than they differ from each other.

The charges against Mr. Mann, when divested of the husk of extraneous and irrelevant circumstances, amount to these three:

1. That although he admits, in the present state of society, the necessity, in the discipline of a school, of recourse to corporal punishment, and other modes of influence which he does not consider the highest, yet he says what he can, and does what he can, to bring these modes of discipline into disfavor; and to urge teachers, whenever and wherever it is possible, to act themselves from higher motives, and to lead their pupils to act, as far as

possible, from higher motives, — the love of knowledge, the love of their fellow-men, a generous confidence in each other, the sense of duty, and a deep reverence for God and his laws:

2. That, while he admits that the teachers "are as good as public opinion has demanded; as good as public sentiment has been disposed to appreciate; as good as public liberality has been ready to reward, — as good as the preliminary measures taken to qualify them would authorize us to expect," — he is constantly endeavoring to act upon public opinion, and to elevate public sentiment, so that the present teachers shall have inducements to improve themselves and that better teachers shall be appreciated and demanded, — and stimulating public liberality to offer higher rewards, and to provide measures to give the teachers better qualifications:

3. That he is not perfectly familiar with the details of teaching, in all its departments, and consequently sometimes recommends methods not approved of by some teachers.

In regard to the first of these, it must be admitted that Mr. Mann does not approve of some of the modes which are generally followed, and of the motives which, in some places, are exclusively relied upon, in the instruction and government of children. But suppose he does believe that the spirit of emulation is strong enough in society already, and needs not to be cultivated in school; suppose he does think that the unbounded and profligate ambition, so rife in the land, owes something of its mighty and terrible force to the hot-bed culture it receives in early education; that the love of money *is* a root of evil powerful enough of itself, and sufficiently overgrown and excessive, in the American character, already; and that, therefore, the constant excitement of medals, and places, and prizes, powerful as it is in the youthful mind, is questionable, perhaps dangerous. Suppose he does believe that constant appeals to the fear of pain, of shame, and of ridicule, to mercenary motives, and to the selfish appetite for praise and for distinction, are debasing; that they may, and sometimes do, poison all the springs of generous action. Suppose he does believe and teach, that the schools ought to exercise a regenerating influence on society; that the standard there *ought to be* higher than it is in the world; that the school-master ought to be a man of a lofty tone of character, of exemplary gentleness, purity, kindness, and truth, — incapable of suspicion, incapable of meanness, or falsehood, or cruelty. Suppose he believes all this; are these, and such as these, things to be objected against a man whose duty it is, from his official relations, to elevate the standard of thinking on these subjects, to be more than a conservator of public morals, — to lead, if he can, public sentiment?

The second charge amounts substantially to this: Mr. Mann thinks that the teachers of our common schools should be better educated than they usually are. He thinks the office of teacher the most sacred office on earth; that the work of giving direction to the infant immortal mind, is, in itself, a more important work than that of providing for the comforts of the body, or of healing its diseases; than that of settling men's affairs, or making their laws; or even that of preaching the Gospel of truth to grown men and women, *after their character is formed.* He thinks that, therefore, the best talents and the purest moral character in the community should be engaged in the work. He thinks that the business of teaching should be raised to the rank of a profession, and that the successful teacher should have a place by the side of the physician, the merchant, the lawyer, and the divine; and so highly does he appreciate the mental and moral qualifications and attainments necessary to an accomplished teacher, that he would have years spent in special preparation for the office. So he thinks; and he has been laboring for years, *in his own way*, and the gentlemen will easily understand what that means, to make other people think so too. In doing this, he has said, and has been obliged by truth to say, many things very distasteful to those of the old let-alone school. But how nobly has he said them. Which of us teachers, no matter how high his standard was before, but has had it raised still higher by the hearty, earnest appeals of this denounced Secretary? Which of us, as he has read these annual Reports, has failed to have his spirit strongly stirred within him? Do what we would, we have, in spite of ourselves, imbibed a new sense of the importance of our office, and of the extent and magnitude of its requirements. The Secretary has, indeed, spoken to some purpose. The voice which has waked the teacher, slumbering on his post, has deeply moved society. That broken slumber must not again be indulged in. We must gird ourselves manfully and resolutely to the work, or we shall be pushed aside and braver young spirits will be called in to take our place. The habit of slumbering *had* grown almost into a school-master's second nature. He had often begun with a silly self-conceit, and ended with being little better than a fool; so that an old school-master was, in common speech, but another name for an old dotard.—But for Massachusetts, and for this generation, that state of things has passed. The calm, stern, philosophic spirit of the descendant of the Pilgrims is not easily roused, but, when roused, no New-Englander needs to be told with what energy it acts. Upon this subject it is roused. Those qualities have been found united in one man which have always been able to rouse it,—the power of

conceiving and the power of uttering great truths, with a superiority to selfish interests. This roused spirit, thus moving in the community, will give us teachers great uneasiness if we determine to resist it. Is it then wise, in us, to attempt resistance? Would it not be wiser, instead of trying to stem the onward progress of opinion, to endeavor to lead it? Instead of struggling to continue poorer teachers than public opinion demands, to resolve to be better than it requires?

The argument against special training for the office of a teacher has not been fairly stated. A teacher, entering upon his work without any particular preparation, has been compared by the gentlemen to "the Masons and Websters, who studied the laws and constitution of their country in some village in New Hampshire." Whoever knows Daniel Webster, and has ever known Christopher Gore, will not, I think, be inclined to consider one or two years' diligent study in the Governor's office in Court Square, as precisely no preparation for the legal profession, or as likely to leave the young Webster in a state very like to that of "a sturdy lad from New Hampshire or Vermont, who, in turn, tries all the professions; who *teams it*, *farms it*, *peddles*, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, buys a township, and so forth." Not more to the purpose is the implied and irreverent comparison with that noble apostle Paul, who had not only been brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, but had been miraculously called by the Lord himself; had been separated to the work by fasting, prayer, and the laying on of hands, and had been "sent forth by the Holy Ghost."

The unprepared teacher, who gains experience and the whole knowledge of his art by practising, alone and unaided, upon the minds and spirits of children, is he not rather like the quack who, for five dollars, purchases of a charlatan the right to use a set of drugs, of whose composition he knows nothing, upon diseases and constitutions of which he knows as little? This comparison, however, is not a fair one, though less unfair than those above referred to. If the excellent old custom of our Puritan fathers were still in vogue, of putting a young man as an apprentice to a schoolmaster for seven years, or even for three, such an apprentice, at the completion of his term, would be precisely in the condition, in reference to his calling, of the student of law, theology, or medicine, who had gone through his novitiate in the office or study of a private individual. And I venture to say, that the Secretary would not lightly pronounce such a one "incompetent," or "deeply and widely deficient." But that good old custom has long since passed out of use, together with that equally excellent one founded on a law of 1647, that every town

of one hundred families should *maintain* a grammar school, the master whereof should be able to qualify youth for the college. This admirable law continued in force up to 1789, when a law was substituted whereby only towns having two hundred families were obliged to maintain, that is, keep up through the year, such a school. Finally, in 1826, this law was repealed, and only the most ordinary requirements were insisted upon for the schools of all towns of less than five hundred families or householders. Every person in the least degree acquainted with the condition of the schools in towns of this class, that is, in nearly all the towns in the State, from 1826 to 1837, must know that they continued rapidly to decline throughout that period, and that in 1837 their condition was lower and worse than it had been, probably, since the landing at Plymouth.

Thus we see, that from the days of their extreme poverty, for a space of more than 140 years, the venerable fathers of Massachusetts required every town of one hundred families constantly to maintain a grammar school, the master whereof should be "of good morals, and well instructed in the Latin, Greek, and English languages." There must thus have been a great body of permanent, learned, and able teachers, and to them custom required that apprentices should be indented, as they now are in the trades. Had this law and this custom continued in operation to the present day, there would have been at this moment, in every town in the Commonwealth, except twelve or thirteen, a permanent grammar school, taught by a man of the highest grade of education; and in every one of them, probably, one or two apprentices.

Now I venture to say, that the Secretary, in his wildest dreams, never imagined such a thing as bringing back the schools to the standard of 1647. Are then, — I put it to the gentlemen, — the exertions of the Secretary, for the better qualification of the teachers of the common schools, so very foreign to the spirit of those glorious old fathers, who laid so broadly and deeply the foundations of the freedom, and intelligence, and liberal institutions of New England?

As to the third charge, there can be no doubt, that, having been neither apprenticed to a school-master, nor having served long as a school-master, — though he is not without experience in that line of life, having been a teacher, an officer in a college, a school-committee man, a reviser and expounder of the State School-laws, and now for seven years devoted to the interests of the schools, — he is not perfectly familiar with the details of instruction in every department. How many practical teachers are so? How many teachers of the mathematics have kept themselves thoroughly

informed of the nice matters of idiom, metre, accent, and history, which belong to the classics? How many classical instructors are at home in the intricacies of algebra, or the manipulations of chemistry? The truth is, we have not many thoroughly accomplished scholars, in the largest sense of the word. There are not many such in any country. Almost every science, and every branch of literature, has had its limits so widely extended, that oftentimes a life is hardly sufficient for the full mastery of a single one. The votaries of the natural sciences are finding those fields too wide; they are obliged to run boundaries, and confine themselves to their several allotments. Botany or chemistry alone is enough of itself to tax the capacities of one individual. And so in the sciences of pure and mixed mathematics, in the moral and physical sciences, and in ancient and modern learning. It is not, therefore, ground of a charge of incompetency in the Secretary, that he is not familiar with all the elements even of those branches which ought to be taught in the common schools. The wonder rather is that he should have found time, amid the multiplicity of his other cares, coming so recently from a profession more than any other remote from these things, to render himself so familiar with the matters to be taught and the methods of teaching, as to give most useful hints, and even most valuable directions, to any one honestly desiring to be instructed, — in every branch which he has brought under examination. The truth is, there is no ground for the charge. Let any one compare those parts of the Reports which treat of reading, with that part of these Remarks which relates to the same subject. He will find the former clear, intensely interesting, full of striking illustrations, abundantly suggestive, and richly rewarding perusal by the oldest scholar; while the other, though good, he will find rather involved, not very interesting, and almost invariably perplexed by the very witticisms which seem to have been intended to give it spirit and brilliancy. Yet the author is evidently a man of ability; superior, probably, to most of those who are actual teachers.

Would it not have been better, it may be reasonably asked, to appoint such a person, one actively engaged in teaching, to the place of Secretary of the Board? I think, on general principles, it would not. No teacher, and no other individual living, with perhaps a single exception, could have been found so deeply versed in what may be called externals to the schools, — the laws, their bearing upon the schools and on each other, and the duties of committee-men and others in reference to the schools. This is an indispensable part of the Secretary's qualifications. Then

a teacher must have come wedded, more or less, to particular modes of teaching and discipline, and not likely, therefore, to look upon all with an impartial eye. It is one of the great lessons we learn from history, that improvement, reform in society, has almost uniformly come from abroad. The establishment of the Board of Education was a measure of reform; and wisely, as it seems to me, the first Board cast their eyes upon a member of a profession so foreign to the business of teaching, that he was likely to regard every question from a new point of view. His prominent place, and his known and preëminent mental and moral endowments, made the selection not a difficult one. And he has done what his friends wished; and vastly more and better than they expected. Such Reports upon the subject of education have never before been made. Such an impulse to the cause has never before been given. The pages of the Secretary are luminous with the noblest truths, and cheerful with the warmest and most hopeful philanthropy. The great truths which he has proclaimed, and will continue to proclaim, have already reached far beyond the limits of our narrow State. They are echoing in the woods of Maine, and along the St. Lawrence and the Lakes. They are heard throughout New York, and throughout all the West and the South West. A conviction of their importance has sent a Massachusetts man to take charge of the schools of New Orleans; they are at this moment regenerating those of Rhode Island. In the remotest corner of Ohio, forty men, not children and women, but *men*, meet together to read aloud a single copy of the Secretary's Reports which one of them receives; thousands of the best friends of humanity of all sects, parties, and creeds, in every State of the Union, are familiar with the name of Horace Mann, who will never hear of these gentlemen, or of their unreasonable objections and "Remarks."

There is no mistaking it; a current has been set in motion which is not to be checked. It will move onward. These gentlemen cannot stem it: the strongest and the best of man's impulses are with it. Let men club together in common cause by scores or by thirties; they may, doubtless, stay the tide for a time; but the deep waves go surging on, and will at last reach even them. Party spirit may, for a time, in Massachusetts, as it has done in Connecticut, defeat the measures of the friends of better instruction in the common schools. Remorseless bigotry may overturn the very system of common schools, rather than see them in other hands than its own. Every thing external may be swept away; but the spirit of improvement lives in the New-England heart, and will surely show its life in new and unexpected forms. I do not say this here because I think these gentlemen sympathize with the friends of darkness and bigotry.

I know that some of them do not. But, by making their attack at this time, they are doing what they can to help on that interest. And some of their advisers would doubtless rejoice to silence the voice of the Secretary forever. And even if they should silence that one voice; should they grieve one over-sensitive and overworn spirit to death; can they believe that the cause would perish? Would Stowe of Ohio, and Barnard of Connecticut, and Young, and his seventy noble helpers of New York, and Howe of Massachusetts, die with him? All these are his hearty good friends, and are heartily engaged in the same cause. Could not Providence, which has, out of a President of a Senate, — no very promising material, as official party station is often conferred, — made a strong, undaunted friend of children, — could not the same Providence raise up others, equally strong and undaunted?

Let not the gentlemen fancy that this great movement, which they feel, and which seems to make them uncomfortable, is the work of one man, or of a few men; that it is accidental; that it would have been much otherwise if a selfish man, devoted to his own selfish purposes, or the ready creature of a party, or the organ of a sect, had held the place of the Secretary. There is no accident in all this. Let us rather say, there is a Providence in it. There is a power above us that shapes our ends. The cry of humanity, suffering from ignorance and sin, from the ignorance and sin of its oppressors, has gone upward. There is an ear open to the cry. There is a friend that hears every sob of the poorest infant, whether in the schools and mining dens of Old England, or the schools for whites or for blacks in New England. And I thank God that those sobs are not heard in vain.

G. B. E.

(Geo. B. Emerson)

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